American, Israeli firms talk shop in Baltimore: [FINAL Edition]

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ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

That's why Mitam and 39 other Israeli companies have borne the expense of flying to Towson for the second annual American-Israel Technology Exchange and Conference (AITEC). The conference, which runs through today at the Sheraton Baltimore North Hotel, brings 40 high-tech Israeli companies in contact with 150 of their American counterparts. More than one-third of them, like Roadnet, have operations in the Baltimore area.

Baltimore's Jewish community, through an arm of the Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, has run a sister-city program for several years for economic development with the Israeli town of Kiryat Gat.

FULL TEXT

Shani Omer, a solidly built, sandy-haired Israeli, punches a button, moves a cursor and clicks a mouse.

Suddenly, in full color on his computer screen there appears an intricate, three-dimensional rendering of some rough-looking desert terrain, complete with topographic detail, sightlines and roads.

David Carp of Roadnet Technologies Inc. in Timonium also looks closely at the computer screen. As a subsidiary of United Parcel Service, Roadnet is interested in anything that can help keep vehicle fleets on the road as efficiently as possible.

Mr. Carp listens closely to Mr. Omer and trades shop talk with his boss, Nir Goldman, president of Mitam, a software firm based in the town of Ramat Gan.

Like many of America's defense contractors and small businesses, much of Israel's business community believes its economic salvation lies in finding civilian applications for its technologies at home and abroad.

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The conference is a testament not only to the need of Israeli companies to broaden their horizons, but to the growing interest in investing in Israel. The popular Comdex show in Las Vegas, for instance, has set aside a two-day miniconference on Israel.

The choice of Baltimore for AITEC also reflects the prominent role the city has played in Israel's economic development efforts.

Baltimore's Jewish community, through an arm of the Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, has run a sister-city program for several years for economic development with the Israeli town of Kiryat Gat.

This summer, several of the people working on that program helped establish the Maryland-Israel Development Center, a non-profit organization sponsored by the Associated, the state of Maryland and the Israel Ministry of Industry and Trade.

"We thought the creation of this office could get a boost" from the AITEC conference, said Gad Soen, director of the trade ministry's Center for Business Promotion.

He said the high-technology focus of the conference, which was in New York last year, also led the organizers to Baltimore. "I think Baltimore in particular and Maryland in general is a good place for this, because Maryland is known for its high-tech industries," Mr. Soen said.

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